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The art of sharing in harmony a crowded planet

"It is sometimes said that, in the 15 or 20 years following 1944, Canada went through a Golden Age of diplomacy," observed Dr. Arnold C. Smith on March 12 in the introduction to his inaugural lecture as first Lester B. Pearson Professor of International Affairs at Carleton University, Ottawa. *"Certainly, in this period Canadian initiatives often proved significant, at times decisive. It is sometimes suggested that this successful burst of Canadian diplomacy was due to the fact that, in the early years after the war, so many of the erstwhile great powers of Western Europe and Asia were weakened by the world struggle that there was a vacuum, which Canada was able to fill. It is sometimes added that, since this vacuum could not last, this 'diplomatic' influence, naturally, could not continue."* Such an interpretation of "Canada's diplomatic prominence in the post-war period" Dr. Smith, former Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, criticized as "superficial and misleading", giving "unrealistic weight...to the factor of relative national power". "It implies," he declared, "what I consider a widespread but less-than-adequate understanding of the real nature of international affairs...".

The lecturer went on to note that "the getting, holding and yielding of power in society" was, by certain "hard-nosed theorists", regarded as "the very definition of politics, what it is all about". His own preference, he said was for "the broader, if less clear-cut, concept of political activity as action designed and calculated to help shape the future of the society you are concerned with". After a brief dismissal of politics conceived as "what social science jargon now calls a 'zero-sum game'", examples of which were Lenin's "Kto kovo?", "Who does it to whom?" view of political reality and the "divide and rule" policy historically adopted by imperial powers, Dr. Smith turned to the main argument of his lecture, which follows in part:

But history, as well as philosophy, suggests that people eventually come to recognize that the promotion of cohesion, co-operation, and a satisfying stability can be not only safer but more profitable. Towards the end of 1965, for example, Mr. Kosygin took his initiative at Tashkent to mediate the Indo-Pakistan struggle. Many people thought, and some said, that this was a "sock in the eye" for the Commonwealth in general and for me in particular. Personally, as I said at the time, I welcomed it, and for several reasons, one of which was that, as an old Muscovite, and one who likes the Russian people, I was happy to see them learn that it would be to their interest to try to heal rather than to exacerbate a quarrel outside the Soviet bloc.

Excessive monopolization of power

used to dominate your fellow citizens is apt to be inefficient, just as the abuse of power to disintegrate societies outside your border is apt to be only superficially clever, and prove ultimately short-sighted and dangerous.

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In my experience a country's relative power, economic, military, or otherwise, while far from unimportant, is not normally the main determinant of its relative influence in international affairs — or of the relative influence of its individual representatives. I think it important to realize this, and I stress it because many people, including some powerful people in powerful governments, do not do so.

It is simply not true that the main instruments of diplomacy are the carrot and the stick — the cheque-book, as it

